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Study of the effect of planned questioning on pupil response during religious instruction

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECT
OF PLANNED QUESTIONING ON PUPIL RESPONSE
DURING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

by
Sister Melanie Bair, O.S.F.

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Higher level thinking is required before children can do religious thinking. Before the age of fourteen most children show little facility to abstract independently. Many educable mentally retarded (EMR) children are limited in this way throughout their lives. Others can be stimulated to perform some simple abstraction. The present investigator speculated on the basis of teaching experience that EMR's could develop higher level of response patterns if efforts were made to use both controlled questioning and positive reinforcement as stimulating factors. It was suggested that as the retarded child experiences satisfaction in successfully responding he would be motivated to increase his correct responses. This conjecture was submitted to verification in the present study.

Statement of the Problem

The teacher may be a crucial variable in establishing pupil response patterns. Therefore the study under consideration attempts to explore the effects of the

teacher's efforts to elicit from educable mentally retarded (EMR) children responses to higher level questioning required for their growing ability to do religious thinking. Through her application of seven weeks of carefully planned questions, the writer sought to answer the following questions:

1. Does planned questioning elicit higher level response with EMR's?
2. Can the child's level of cognitive functioning be modified by teacher technique?
3. Which level of response is most readily modified by planned questioning?

Since the present investigation was a sub-study of a project on the use of film and its effects on EMR's the writer also attempted to consider the following question:

1. Does the use of instructional film exert an influence on the level of response for EMR's in an instructional period?

Justification of the Study

The retarded child often suffers from lack of challenge and intellectual stimulation. Since any child's development is limited when he lacks stimulation and challenge, it is easy to see the effect of their absence on the retarded child's life. Lest the retarded child suffer

crippling religious formation, his educators seek to supply proper motivation. There is a definite relationship between the child's ability to deal with his persistent life situations and his ability to find religion meaningful. True, EMR's do have limited ability in reasoning, but it is equally true that some teachers may not be challenging EMR's ability to think to their optimum.

EMR's have a short educational life. By the time these children complete their academic and vocational training they must have an adequate cognitive habits to sustain them for their entire future. There is, therefore, the need for optimal challenge during these short academic years.

Since EMR's tend to be easily distractable and have short attention spans the teacher must use attractive instructional materials and carefully selected teaching methods. Results of recent research suggest that perhaps a combination of instructional film and controlled questioning may be an appropriate combination of media and method.

If EMR's gradually develop ability to deal with concepts, they acquire this ability through maturation and stimulation. If EMR's (M.A. 5-5 to 7-5) are able to begin responding to higher level questions of a religious nature, one should test to what degree they are successful. Inability

to maintain high accuracy should be no deterrent to asking this kind of question, since growth presupposes challenge.

Limitations

The study was conducted within the framework of thirty-four lessons during a seven week period and with reference to a relatively small number of subjects.

Two other factors might be considered limiting although the investigator did not find them so: (1) the fact that this was a sub-study to a doctoral study which asked questions that were proposed for this investigator's study, (2) the materials (sixteen millimeter silent colored film) used for the experimental group had not been subjected to previous test for instructional media and, (3) all subjects were an intact population from a small residential school.

Also limiting is the fact that all subjects were EMR's with various learning disabilities. No previous classification of each subject's particular learning problem had been made. On the basis of a three week readiness program it was presumed that the proposed study would be educationally beneficial to all who participated.

Clarification of Terms

EMR--educable mentally retarded:

A term used to refer to mentally retarded persons whose disabilities are such that they are incapable of meaningful achievement in traditional academic subjects such as reading and arithmetic. Also used to refer to those mentally retarded children who may be expected to maintain themselves independently in the community as adults or to that group of mentally retarded obtaining IQ scores between 50 and 70, 75 or 80.¹

Questioning-- verbal interaction which the teacher uses as the teaching instrument with which to effectively arouse and sustain interest and attention of the pupils, provide pupil participation, and stimulate productive thinking in the pupils. The questions used to stimulate responses were simplified conceptually and the vocabulary was carefully controlled.

Levels of Questions-- Three levels of questions were asked of the students:

Level one was either interrogative or semi-structured in form. It was used only to check the child's consciousness and awareness of the matter under discussion. Illustration: Teacher-"God is a loving Father...Who is God?" Or "God is good. God is what?" This type of question demanded simple repetition and nothing more.

Level two questions demanded factual response:
Illustration: "Who made the world?" This indicated the

¹Prepared by Rick Heber, A Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation (Williamantic, Connecticut: American Association on Mental Deficiency, September, 1959), p. 98.

development of a frame of reference, an ability to listen and be able to recall previously taught information. These questions challenged both short-term and long-term (information from the previous lesson) retention.

Level three questions consisted of "why" and "how" questions which required a causal explanation, more abstract reasoning, and/or an interpretative response. Illustration: "Why is man greater than animals?"

Social Reinforcement-- Rewards are called social reinforcers; they tend to increase the likelihood that a given behavior will be repeated.

Research Question

It is hypothesized that the consistent use of controlled questioning and praise as reinforcement with educable mentally retarded children yields an increased facility to deal with questions requiring a higher level of response. Secondly, the investigator hypothesized that the use of instructional films would exert a positive influence on educable mentally retarded children's ability to respond to higher level questions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Religion and the Retarded Child

If the Church were to neglect bringing the 'good news' to any one group of her members she would be contradicting her essential mission. A recent defense of the mentally retarded child and the Church's ministry elaborates:

...that which Christianity is all about is universal. No period of history, no group of people is excluded from its influence. If we really believe that Christ wishes to make Himself available to every person, then we realize that Christ accepts people as they really are; and some people are mentally retarded. God understands, far better than we, the problems these persons bring to every learning situation, including learning about Him. God still wants to come to them. He still wants them to come to Him. Religious instruction makes this union possible.¹

For centuries the Church has been a bulwark between the retardate and a hostile society. However, it has only been in the recent decades that there has been an increasing interest and concern in regard to the religious education of retardates.

The psychologist would provide a second reason for

¹Sister M. Sheila Haskett, "Why Teach Religion to the Retarded Child?", The Parent Educator, (January, 1969), p. 7A.

teaching religion to the mentally retarded...The aspects of the human person--body, mind, emotions, soul--are intermingled so thoroughly that we cannot think of them separately.²

Bissonnier is one of the most important contemporary advocates for this apostolate. He offers both principles and methods to the teacher of retarded children. He begs...

Let such children approach the Lord...and let us not be among those who try to keep them from Him. Let us believe in their worth, in their reason for being. Let us know, in one word, how to love them as God Himself loves them, He who had His reasons for allowing their life, for maintaining their presence amongst us, on our earth and in His Church, of which they also are members.³

It is acknowledged, of course, that learning potential varies greatly among retarded. If educators are to communicate effectively, it is necessary that they adapt the material to the child's particular level of readiness.

It is the religious educator's responsibility to make an effort to create "God-consciousness", to teach truths of the faith, and to help the child develop to the fullest as a person and a Christian. To realize her goals the teacher must attempt to provide an environment needed for positive growth in God-consciousness, and for learning the truths of the faith.

²Ibid., 8A.

³Henri Bissonnier, Catechetical Pedagogy of the Mentally Deficient Children (Brussels: Lumen Vitae Press, 1967), p. 159.

Goldman insists that the "teacher's major task is to communicate truths on an intellectual plane, whereby religious thinking is engaged at as high a level as the ability of the pupil will allow."⁴ Again he maintains that from an early age the child "is forming a series of religious concepts and developing a theology...which is continually changing as he thinks about God and his activities in the world."⁵ For the child, whether his religious development is normal or slow-rate, there is a long "period of apprenticeship, experimentation and searching in childhood religion which must precede adult religious thinking."⁶ It is suggested therefore that stimulating the children visually with adequate media and stimulating them verbally to higher level questions will ready them to deal with higher level religious thinking.

Religion Readiness

Although the concept of readiness is centuries old, it has taken on new dimensions in contemporary education. It is no longer considered just a phase in a child's education but a necessary factor in all forms systematic

⁴Ronald Goldman, Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 3.

⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁶Ibid.

learning at all levels. It is only a part of the instructional process but its desired product. Any new learning is built upon some previously acquired knowledge or ability which opens further and new learning.

We do not wait for children to grow into readiness for religion. Teachers must assist in the process of readiness by appropriate preparatory learning.

When and if the principle of readiness is fully acknowledged it ought to facilitate learning for all students. Goldman states:

Waiting passively for readiness to develop is no part of the function of the religious teacher. Many could well be less zealous and more patient, since undue and unsuitable pressures can set up negative attitudes as in other subjects. But active preparation which enriches, directs and stimulates relevant experience may be the most important function for infant school teachers in religious education. This preliminary experience is the foundation upon which the later teaching is based, but all too frequently in the past we have been so eager to get on with 'the real teaching of the gospel' that inadequate foundations have been laid. Without this valuable initial work, much of what is taught may result in a mere religious vocabulary or the crystallizing of ideas too soon, which prevents a child reaching forward to higher levels of thought. Far from helping the child we impede his religious growth.⁷

What Durbin says regarding reading can be aptly applied to the teaching of religion.

A readiness program that insures the child's success

⁷Ronald Goldman, Readiness for Religion (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 44.

through the sequential skill presentation and repetition afforded by interesting supplementary activities to reinforce previously taught skills when necessary is especially important for the retarded child whose self-confidence, effort and consequently his performance are in jeopardy if he fails...as a result of inadequate preparation.⁸

There are different levels of development in a child's life when he can receive certain methods and content and they will be more advantageous in helping him grow in readiness. Religious educators must observe this pattern of development and realize that there are certain religious truths that may be aptly developed at certain moments in a child's growth. It will be new experience in addition to past experiences which prepares children for the next stage of development as well as fulfilling present spiritual needs.

Goldman isolates three kinds of religious readiness: (1) emotional readiness, (2) physical readiness and (3) intellectual readiness.⁹

"Values and ideals can be seen and comprehended by students when the living processes and conditions which lead to those ideals are already known favorably by them."¹⁰

⁸Mary Durbin, Teaching Techniques for Retarded and Pre-Reading Students (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1967), p. 20.

⁹Goldman, op. cit., pp. 45-57.

¹⁰Asabel Woodruff, Basic Concepts of Teaching (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1961), p. 228.

Children are usually well disposed toward religion and religious teaching and they can easily be motivated in relation to religion. It is the child's environment, especially his relationship with his parents that supplies the proper emotional readiness for religion. However, with the institutionalized retardate the religion teacher provides stimulus for more adequate and altruistic emotional readiness for religion. She does this various ways; among others, by promoting a sense of the sacred, adequate challenge and her high quality motivation.

Physical readiness is needed insofar as it helps the child to participate in appropriate activities. There is such a close interplay between body, mind and spirit that physical readiness does contribute to a child's religious education.

There are various ways of designating the stages of intellectual readiness. The present author borrows Goldman's two basic readiness stages: pre-religious and sub-religious. It is at the pre-religious stage that children find it difficult to conceptualize religious truths without distorting them. At this stage everything is a source of wonder to the child. A curriculum is needed in which the wonder of God's world in nature, animals and all experiences can guide the child to the realization that it is all part of

the divine creation.¹¹

Children at the sub-religious stage are characterized by intellectually appearing to be ready to absorb a great deal of data and are able to relate these facts one with the other. Life-themes such as homes, people who care for, and help others are most appropriate content for a curriculum at this stage. Using life-themes enables the child to acquire a definite sense of relation between religion and everyday life.¹²

These are the readiness stages or the preparatory stages for more abstract modes of thinking. At the same time the limitation of the students should not deter the teacher from assessing higher levels of readiness as well as stimulating them through her teaching strategies.

Readiness for the retarded child involves a much more elongated process and demands much greater attention to the various readiness factors. Attention, sustained interest and motivation cues must become refined in teaching strategies designed for these children. Nevertheless, the slow rate of readiness acquisition does not preclude eventual attainment of the kind of capacity demanded for religious thinking. At each succeeding readiness level there is a

¹¹Goldman, op. cit., p. 47.

¹²Goldman, op. cit., p. 48.

greater facility to deal with more abstract religious thinking, less primitive prayer forms and clarification of distorted religious concepts provided the student has had educators sensitive to his readiness and willing to challenge him to further growth.

Relationship Between Language and Conceptualization

Oral language is the tool most commonly used to communicate thoughts. These thoughts or concepts were born as a result of numerous perceptual experiences. The quality of conceptual development depends on the quality and variety of these general and specific experiences. After a concept has been acquired, language is used to manipulate the idea.

Since every idea has its words and all words stand for ideas the person possesses, it is true to say that the size of one's vocabulary is a good index of his mental powers because it is a fair measure of the number of concepts he has and can use in his thinking.¹³

There has been a great deal of research in recent decades on language development and its dependence upon the cognitive processes.

Papania, as cited by Badt, to find whether mentally retarded children were less abstract in defining words than

¹³Woodruff, op. cit., p. 81.

normal children with the same mental age. He found that though mentally retarded children of a given age could define as many words as normal children of the same mental age, they defined words at a lower level of abstractness.¹⁴

Spreen, in a study of the relationship between intellectual and language development in mental retardation, affirmed that there is a relative independence between language and intelligence. However, he also stated that there are relatively high correlations obtained between intelligence and measurements of vocabulary up to a mental age of seven or eight years.¹⁵

McCarthy suggests that linguistic defects can 'cause' intellectual defects and the converse may be equally true. Many factors contribute to the development of expressive language. However, McCarthy views the child's etiology, intelligence and environment as the most influential factors in language development.¹⁶

Reiss studied the implications of Piaget's developmen-

¹⁴Margit I. Badt, "Levels of Abstraction in Vocabulary Definitions of Mentally Retarded School Children," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LXIII (1958), pp. 241-246.

¹⁵Otfried Spreen, "Language Function in Mental Retardation: A Review: Part I," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LXIX (1965), pp. 482-492.

¹⁶James McCarthy, "Linguistic Problems of the Retarded," Mental Retardation Abstracts, I (1964), pp. 3-21.

tal psychology for mental retardation. Piaget's theory of intelligence described as a sequence of developmental steps is applied by Reiss to the area of mental retardation. "Piaget postulates a definite sequence of developmental steps, a sequence which is invariant for all individuals."¹⁷ Piaget and Inhelder proposes that "...mental backwardness comes from a partial or total stop in mental functions at a certain level of normal development."¹⁸

Piaget's work does raise the question for special educators regarding the possibility of devising a method of instruction which may accelerate the development of intellectual functions, even for those whose development is retarded.

Reiss finds little evidence to support this position. Most educators indicate that this type of acceleration is unattainable. He cites Berlyne as indicating that training enabled children to make responses typical of a more advanced stage but lack a degree of understanding. Reiss further states that Smedslund shows that teaching methods designed to elicit methods of problem solving are more

¹⁷Philip Reiss, "Implications of Piaget's Developmental Psychology for Mental Retardation," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LXXII (November, 1967), p. 361.

¹⁸Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder, "Diagnosis of Mental Operations and Theory of Intelligence," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LI (January, 1947), p. 401.

effective than teaching methods that focused on training specific responses. Reiss suggests that "...it may be possible to foster intellectual development if the procedures lead the child through responses which usually contribute to such development."¹⁹

Since it is the teacher who can supply a number of concept building experiences, it is she who will be instrumental in accelerating growth if it can be done. In a study of cognitive processes in the classroom, Taba states that teacher behavior consists in focusing, extending and lifting. Focusing presents the cognitive task, the extending operation serves to help the child assimilate and the lifting operation raises the thought of the child to a higher cognitive level.²⁰

Teacher-Technique in Relationship to Level of Response

Educational researchers have been working on the problem of teacher effectiveness for many decades.

The present author's concern is the method or technique of teaching that will promote greater teacher-pupil interaction and simultaneously facilitate higher levels of

¹⁹Reiss, op. cit., p. 367.

²⁰B. Othanel Smith, The Evaluation of Teaching, (Washington, D. C., George Banta Co., 1967), pp. 65-84.

student performance.

Minskoff studied teacher-pupil verbal interaction in special classes for the mentally retarded with special reference to the way in which the teacher uses her language to promote productive thinking in her students. She compared the teacher-pupil verbal interaction of teachers instructed in the use of teaching method designed to enhance productive thinking in the mentally retarded (the inductive method) and teachers using other methods. It was found that practically all the teacher questions were in the cognitive-memory category and only a few in the productive thinking category. The findings indicated that the teachers did not exercise their role in promoting productive thinking.²¹

In addition to communicating facts and content of a given area, the verbal action of a teacher must also stimulate thought and encourage pupil participation.

The purpose of using planned questions as a teaching technique is to both initiate thought and invite pupil participation. Questioning may be a needed techniques for young children who are experientially deprived and have not developed a wide frame of reference from which to share personal ideas spontaneously.

²¹Esther H. Minskoff, "Verbal Interactions of Teachers and Mentally Retarded Pupil," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1967.

A recent study provides the rationale for such a question technique study. Floyd sought to discover how teachers use the oral question as an instructional instrument. Forty teachers designated by their principals as their "best" teachers of the primary level were chosen for the study. Lessons were recorded and careful attention was given to the number of words spoken by the teacher and the type of questions that were asked. The investigator found a high number of questions but the majority fell into the two categories of memory or information. There were few questions that motivated thinking or were indicative of the students readiness for further learning.

Floyd concluded that the questions were limited in scope, ineffective as teaching instruments and the teachers seemed unaware of the psychology of oral questioning.²²

Carner insists that the teacher's role must be an active one in deciding what types of thinking are required before questions can be asked which will channel the thinking processes in the right direction. Even though Carner applied his comments to reading teachers the application can be readily made to teachers of religion:

One of the major avenues through which we can help guide and shape pupil's thinking is recognizing the importance

²²William D. Floyd, "Do Teachers Talk Too Much?"
The Instructor, (October, 1968), pp. 53-150.

of proper questioning...However, questioning is an art and will be most effective when the teacher understands the thought processes through which the learner must progress in a given learning situation.²³

Fox, in effort to evaluate teacher and student performance borrowed a standard of criteria devised by Bradfield and Moredock. Fox designates six levels of performance in his study. The first three levels of this analysis coincide with the present researcher's method of evaluating student response.

Level 1- This is the level of initial contact. Student can repeat or duplicate what has just been said, done, or read. Indicates that student is at least conscious or aware of contact with a particular concept or process.

Level 2- To perform on this level, the student must be able to recognize or identify the concept or process when encountered later, or to remember or recall the essential features of the concept or process.

Level 3- Here the student can compare and relate this concept or process with other concepts or processes and make discriminations. He can formulate in his own words a definition, and he can illustrate or give examples.

Fox emphasizes that teachers must be aware of the fact that if students are expected to perform at a high level than the method of teaching must be one that develops this skill.²⁴

The present writer assumed that social reinforcement

²³Richard Carner, "Levels of Questioning" in Studying Teaching, Raths, Pancella and Van Ness, editors (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.. Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 183.

²⁴Fred W. Fox, "Levels of Performance in Teaching" in Studying Teaching, Raths, Pancella and Van Ness, editors (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1967), pp. 153-155.

was needed. Pupil's responses to purposeful and planned questions can serve to be their best motivation. As they are expressing themselves, children are receiving immediate feedback about their self-expression. When praise is used as reinforcement it can be a natural and powerful motivator. "In any attempt to initiate learning or development, the role of encouragement must be recognized."²⁵ Sincere praise and encouragement show faith in the child and recognize his efforts; they imply acceptance of the individual as he is. They enhance the development of the child's self-esteem. Praise is particularly important at the primary level, since interpretations relevant to work tasks and social life are developed at this time. Since peer approval is often influenced by the teacher's acceptance and encouragement, honest praise from a teacher is usually a powerful factor toward group acceptance, and consequently, toward student growth.

Teacher-pupil interaction and pupil-pupil interaction can also be a good stimulus to social development. Piaget stresses repeatedly the importance of interaction with

²⁵Dan Dinkmeyer and Rudolf Dreikurs, Encouraging Children to Learn: The Encouragement Process, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 47.

peers as a means of helping the child to grow from egocentrism.²⁶

"Psychologists have noted that gratification in one area tends to instigate a feeling of well-being that extends into other areas of an individual's life."²⁷ If one applies this premise to satisfaction in religious education, one can postulate a positive transfer to religiously motivated behavior.

Use of Instructional Film with the Mentally Retarded

Since Itard, educators have been searching for teaching techniques and tools that will assist the teacher in providing optimal learning situations for the mentally retarded.

The chief avenues of learning are the five senses. Even early special educators recognized the importance of of training in this area.

Since 1910, the use of film as an educational media has been recognized. However, very few studies exist on the utilization of film and its effectiveness in teaching the mentally retarded.

²⁶Russell Stauffer, Teaching Reading as a Thinking Process, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), pp. 374-396.

²⁷Marie Huges and Associates, "The Model of Good Teaching" in Studying Teaching, Raths, Pancella and Van Ness, editors (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 23.

Harshman and Mahoney's study served as a forerunner in evaluating the use of film with the mentally retarded. Sound film was used as an aid in teaching a unit on transportation to a group of boys from a special class. Findings disclosed the positive value of this type of media in teaching a specific unit in social studies.²⁸

Goldstein studied the use of film in training educable retardates. His object was to prove that there is a marked increase in the learning and retention of facts by educable mentally retarded children with the use of selected film. His study has shown the value of motion picture in developing personal, social and occupational abilities of children with retardation. Goldstein stressed the importance of films containing concrete rather than abstract content.²⁹

Collins, a religious educator, believes:

Experiment and research conclusively demonstrates that films save time, contribute greatly to retention, add vividness to learning, and reinforce methods of teaching so that the effectiveness of instruction may be improved as much as 50 per cent.³⁰

²⁸H. Harshman and A. Mahoney, "Film Learning by Retarded Pupils and Illiterates," Educational Screen, (1938), pp. 359-60.

²⁹Edward Goldstein, Selective Audio-Visual Instruction for Mentally Retarded Pupils (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1964).

³⁰Reverend J. Collins, CCD Methods in Modern Catechetics (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), p. 70.

Sister Judith, MSHS, states that at every level the teacher is the best audio visual aid. "But wisely selected, carefully prepared films and filmstrips, used in a personalized way, may be an extension of the teacher's personality, and increase his effectiveness."³¹

Film and its possible effectiveness in teaching religious truths to retarded children has been recognized by religion teachers. Many catechetical experts in special education advocate the use of audio-visuals in the religious education of these children.

Butcher accentuated the need for a religious curriculum specifically designed for the mentally retarded. He recommended the use of audio-visual aids as an effective technique in presenting religious truths to mentally retarded children.³²

LoBianco reflected the growing concern for the education of mentally retarded within the Church and strongly urged that more effective preparations should be made for the special education and treatment of the mentally retarded. Religious educators must provide stimulating

³¹Sister Judith, MSHS, "Films, Filmstrips for Grade School Religion" in Aids for Religion Teacher: Some Procedures and Techniques, Sister Marie McIntyre, editor (Huntington, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor, 1968), p. 53.

³²Reverend B. Butcher, "Catechetical Means of Teaching the Retarded," National Catholic Association Bulletin, (August, 1965), pp. 534-37.

experiences that will help the child to have a more complete understanding of religious truths.³³

Mialeret emphasizes that teaching films must be designed for specific classes and definite age groups. He also notes that:

Many children in the younger classes retain a new idea in school only is so far as it is presented to them in a context which engages their affectivity, whether it be funny, comic, moving, troubling or frightening.³⁴

An important psychological aspect that should be considered is the empathy phenomena and the behavior of the child spectator. Michotte has aided Mialeret in clarifying this idea. Empathy phenomena, he says:

occurs when a spectator of an action by another person 'lives' it himself to some extent and does not merely try to comprehend it in a purely intellectual way by classifying it into one conceptual category or another.³⁵

Travers warns educators of the danger in flooding the learner's sensory modalities. He states that learners can generally utilize information from only one source at a

³³Reverend F. LoBianco, "The Spiritual Equality of All God's Children," National Catholic Association Bulletin (August, 1965), pp. 527-34.

³⁴G. Mialeret, The Psychology of the Use of Audio-Visual Aids in Primary Education (New York: Unesco Publications Center, 1966), p. 34.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 126-27.

time.³⁶ Perhaps this justifies the use of silent, single concept film in teaching the mentally retarded.

Hockman states that the silent film is nonetheless a motion picture. It presents reality pleasingly and convincingly to the spectator. The motion picture also gives the mind a flow of images which are so real that the spectator easily identifies with the film. Silent film enables the viewer to concentrate more entirely on the matter presented.³⁷

Unfortunately, there are no films of this kind available for slow learning children who are mentally at a primary level.

Summary

In the present chapter, the related literature was surveyed under the following topics: religion and the retarded child, religious readiness, relationship between language and conceptualization, teacher-technique in relationship to level of response and the use of instructional film with the mentally retarded.

The literature reveals a new interest and honest concern

³⁶Robert Travers and Others, Studies Related to the Design of Audio-Visual Teaching Materials (U.S. Office of Education, Final Report, Contract No. 3-20-00, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May, 1966), p. 271.

³⁷William Hockman, Projected Visual Aids for the Church (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1947).

in regard to religious education for mentally retarded children. At the same time many factors must be considered in planning a religious curriculum for the mentally retarded. Admittedly, educators must be aware and knowledgeable of materials that can help make learning an enriching experience for the child. However, of equal importance, is the continued effort of religious educators to use techniques that will stimulate these children to the greatest possible development of their potential. This survey has indicated that the mentally retarded, as well as any other individual is entitled to this opportunity.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Purpose

Every child has the right to the opportunity to develop to the optimum of his capabilities. Special educators of today are concerned with techniques and media that will aid in fully developing the child. Religious educators, too, are becoming increasingly aware of their obligations in stimulating mentally retarded children to their highest potential in religious growth and education.

This study, therefore, was initiated in an effort to investigate the use of planned and controlled questioning as a technique to promote higher level response in educable mentally retarded children during religious instruction.

In addition, effectiveness of silent film in facilitating response of educable mentally retarded children was also explored.

Population of the Study

Subjects for the study were twenty educable mentally retarded children from St. Coletta School, Jefferson, Wisconsin, a private residential facility. Thirteen boys and seven

girls were involved in the study. At the beginning of the research project all twenty children were judged to be free from undue emotional stress and serious perceptual problems other than those presumed because of their handicap. The children were divided into two groups and were selected and equated according to mental age and intelligence quotient. The t-test was employed to determine significance of the differences between the groups. Results are indicated in Table 1.

The sample for this study included ten subjects in each group. The film group consisted of six boys and four girls; the non-film group contained seven boys and three girls. Sex was not considered a relevant variable.

Three students of the film group were spending their first term at the school; one was beginning the second year and six had been at the school two full years or more. The non-film group had two students in their first term at the school and four were beginning their second year. All the others of the non-film group had been at the school for two years or more.

Mental ages of the children in the film group ranged from 66 months to 89 months, with a mean mental age of 76.5 with a standard deviation of 2.58. The non-film group shows a mean mental age of 77.7 with a standard deviation of

TABLE 1

STATISTICAL RESULTS OF INITIAL
COMPARISON BETWEEN FILM
AND NON-FILM GROUPS

Variable	Group	Mean	S.D.	S.E. _M	Diff.	S.E. _D	t-ratio	Confidence Level
M.A.	Film	76.5	7.74	2.58	.12	.76	.16	Nonsignificant
	Non-Film	77.7	8.06	2.68				
I.Q.	Film	62.10	7.39	2.46	.50	1.78	.28	Nonsignificant
	Non-Film	61.60	7.36	2.45				

2.68 and a range of 65 months to 88 months. There was no significant difference between the groups.

The intelligence quotient as measured by the Stanford-Binet, Form L-M was found to be almost identical. The IQ's of the film group ranged from 49 to 74 with a mean IQ of 62.10 with a standard deviation of 2.46. The IQ's of the non-film group ranged from 54 to 77 with a mean IQ of 61.60 with a standard deviation of 2.45. The t-test was insignificant at the .05 level of confidence.

Chronologically, the film group ranged from 110 months to 149 months, with a mean chronological age of 125.5 months. The range for the non-film group was 107 months to 153 months, with a mean chronological age of 131.4.

Teacher

The same teacher taught both the film and non-film groups and used the same orientation, presentation, number and level of questions, and conclusion for both the film and non-film groups. This insured the similarity of the equated instructional situation. The film group differed only in its daily viewing of sixteen millimeter films. Alternate non-film visuals were supplied for the non-film group by the teacher.

Conditions for the Study

The present investigator had agreed to serve as the

pilot teacher in a doctoral research project on the use of film in presenting religious concepts to mentally retarded children. It seemed fortuitous, then, to seize the opportunity for a sub-study which would incorporate planned and controlled questioning as the teaching technique. This technique would presumably derive the most meaning from the presented concept, stimulate the children to higher levels of thinking, and simultaneously measure this possible effect of the use of silent film.

Both the film and non-film groups were taught lessons that were developed by the present investigator from skeletal materials available through basic outlines provided by the senior investigator. Lesson plans for the twelve religious readiness concepts were compiled from many expert resources in the area of religious education. Planning the lessons enabled the teacher-investigator to control the level and quantity of questions. The resource material and lesson plans are noted and described in Appendix A.

The following are the religious readiness concepts taught during the study: (1) Greatness, (2) Strength, (3) Goodness, (4) Loving Concern, (5) Watchfulness, (6) Service, (7) Nature-God's Sacrament, (8) Enjoying Creation, (9) Man-Self Awareness, (10) Man-Steward of Creation, (11) Family Helpfulness and (12) Religious Experience. Seven of the

thirty-four lessons presented were used to reinforce concepts.

The children involved in the study came from four different classrooms. Teachers of these classes released the children twenty minutes daily for the duration of the project and provided no other religious instruction.

Design of the Study

The study itself consisted of thirty-two lessons taught during a seven week period. It began after the children had been in school a month during which time rapport had been established and the children acclimated to the school.

We assume that there are certain periods of the child's development when specific experiences are more meaningfully religious. Each level of development has to fulfill the needs of the child at that stage and also prepare him for the next. Thus even at the sub-religious readiness stage of development the child is challenged by higher level of questioning. Not only should he respond with simple repetition (an indication that he is present to the teacher or to his peers and able to repeat what has just been discussed) but that he should be able to summarize factual information and should begin to attack simple how and why questions.

The present investigator constructed a method of measuring and evaluating the ability of the pupils in the project to deal with increasingly higher level questions.

She sought to stimulate the pupils by carefully designing and controlling the number and level of questions and to motivate by immediate social reinforcement in the form of praise.

The investigator composed five questions of each of the three levels for each unit for each pupil. Each child was challenged with two questions daily. The questions were always precise and clearly worded for the children. By rotating the challenge level for each child and systematically inviting him to higher level reasoning the investigator insured that all the pupils in the study were stimulated to more abstract reasoning, not just the more participative pupils. In an effort to safeguard spontaneity on the part of the children, any student who volunteered was allowed to supply the answer for youngsters hence the difference between number of questions responded to by various subjects who "missed" or didn't fully answer the question. On occasion if the level three questions were too difficult for the pupil the investigator would alter the level by reducing them to a lower level.

The class sessions were taped to provide an accurate rating of the number and quality of pupil responses. After each lesson the tapes were analyzed for the responses of the students. At the conclusion of the study the measurements were gathered into three sections or Unit clusters. Each

section incorporated all the responses of the subjects for four lessons (approximately ten classes). The responses were graphed in Unit clusters.

During the three weeks preceding the study the investigator oriented the students to the planned form of presentation and questioning technique, as well as to the environmental factors. She also used this time to establish rapport with the groups.

Since the physical setting is important to a study, arrangements were made to reduce anything that might detract from an optimal learning situation. The room was well-lighted, and carpeted, had frosted windows, and was located in a quiet corner of the building. Because the children could gather about on the carpeted floor, it was judged to be a less structured situation and more conducive to pupil-teacher interaction as well as to less distraction. A teacher's desk, a low-standing chalkboard with a film screen attached, a concealed tape recorder and microphone were the only furnishings.

Because there was fear of confusion to the students by a rotation of classes, each class met at the same time daily. The film group met first period each morning. After a ten minute period for transition, the non-film group assembled for their class which was in every essential feature, except the form of the visual presentation, identical with that of

the film group.

There were few absences during the study. However, the teacher supplied the lessons missed when an absence did occur.

Summary

This investigation was primarily concerned with evaluating the assumption that carefully designed questioning could increase the level of response in educable mentally retarded children. It also sought to explore the use of film in teaching religious truths and its possible influence on the child's ability to respond at a higher level.

The present chapter was devoted to the purpose of the study, the description of the population, explanation of conditions for the study and the methods of procedure were described.

CHAPTER IV

Interpretation of Data

The first objective of the present study was to evaluate the effect of the technique of planned questioning in stimulating a higher level of response in educable mentally retarded children during an instructional period.

The second research objective was to examine whether silent film had any effect on the children's level of response.

Pertinent data for this study were obtained by teaching comparable lessons to a film and non-film class and listening to the tape of the class sessions and evaluating each pupil's level of response. Graphs were prepared to indicate the performance levels of individual pupils and groups. Graphs seem to be the clearest means of illustrating the quantity and quality of responses since the size of both groups was small.

Level One Data

The data indicate that seven of the children grew in the number of level one questions they could correctly answer, five remained the same from the first unit to the last and eight of the children showed a loss of one to two correct responses. This level requires the students to have

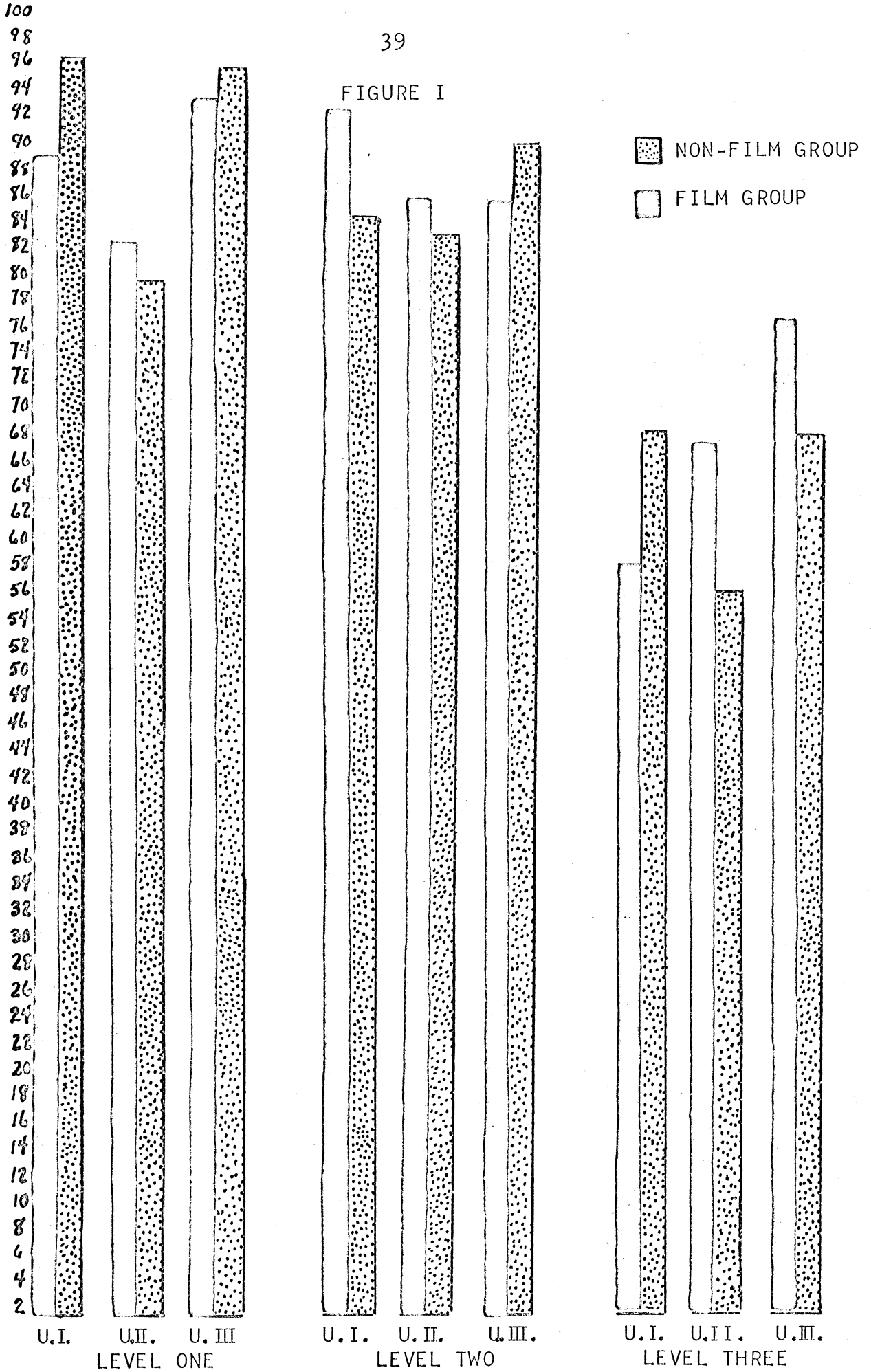
a consciousness and awareness of the subject matter being presented.

The film group answered 88% (56 out of 64) of the questions correctly in the first Unit, responded correctly to 81% (57 out of 70) of the questions during the second Unit and in the last Unit the number of correct responses increased to 92% (69 out of 75). Correct response total for this group increased from 56 in the first Unit, to 69 in the last. See Figures 1 and 2.

During the first Unit the non-film group answered 95% (54 out of 57) of their level one questions correctly; in the second Unit 78% (48 out of 54) of their answers were correct; the last Unit shows 94% (49 out of 52) correct responses. Correct response total for this group decreased from 54 in the first Unit to 49 in the third Unit. Possibly this was due to the teacher asking more level one questions to keep the film group's attention during the orientation and comprehension check.

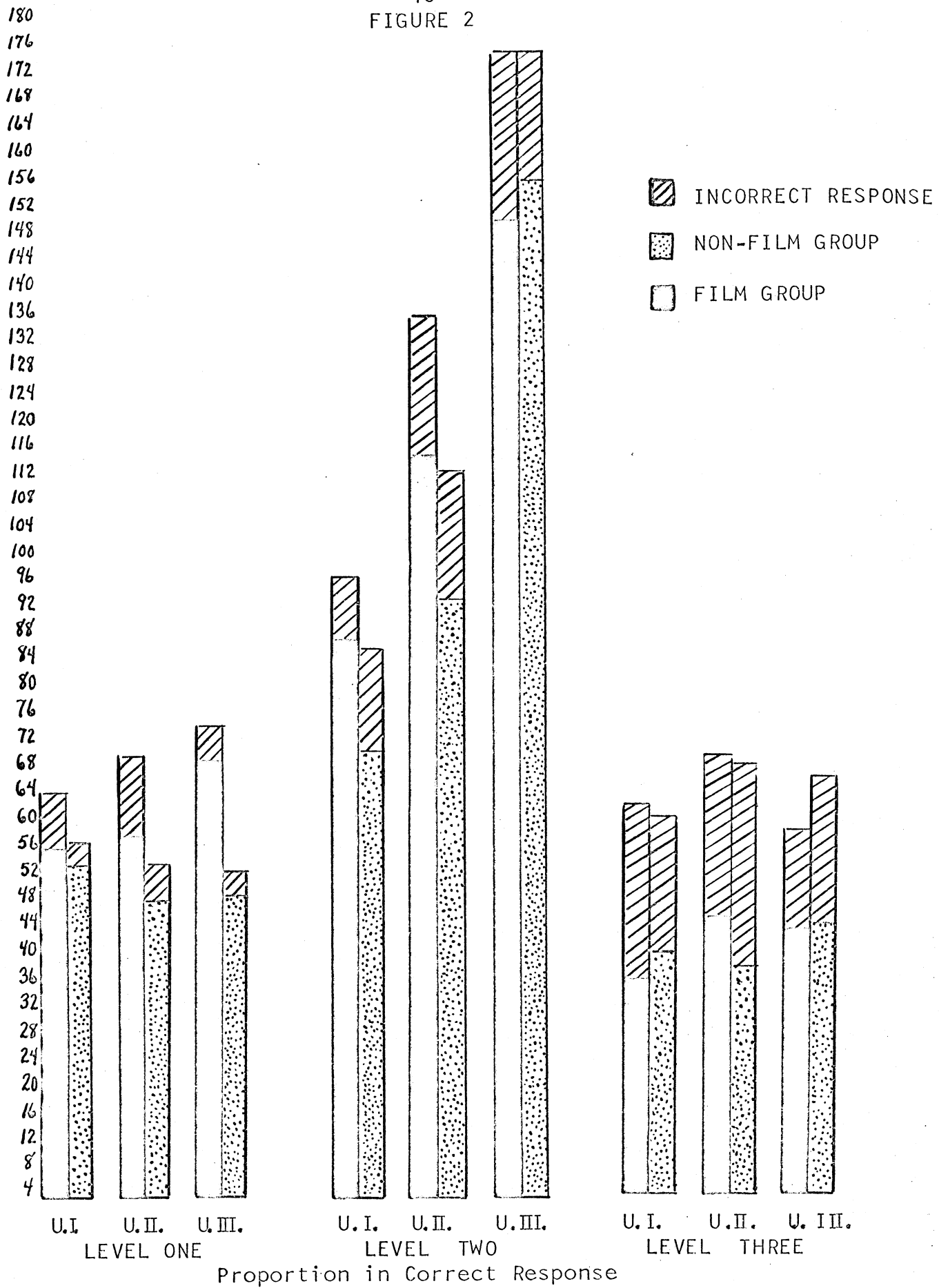
Total results for the Units indicate that the non-film group answered 92% (151 out of 163) of their level one questions and the film group responded correctly to 88% (182 out of 209) of the given level. The film group was asked 12% more level one questions and answered correctly 9% more of these than did the non-film group. Each child in the film group

FIGURE I



Percentage of Correct Response

40
FIGURE 2



correctly responded to a mean of 3.1 more level one questions during the lessons than did pupils in the non-film group.

See Figures 3 and 4.

Level Two Data

As can be observed in the graphs for the individual pupils (Appendix B) and those for the groups, the teacher asked a greater number of level two questions. The increase in number of questions was not planned by the teacher, but rather was the result of pupil-teacher interaction, teacher-media interaction or pupil-media interaction. The teacher often felt the need to question pupils of both groups regarding their understanding of the instructional materials.

All the pupils made considerable gain in the number of level two questions they were able to answer correctly. This indicates the children learned a great deal of factual information and were able to recall and verbalize about it.

In the first Unit, the film group responded correctly to 91% (88 out of 97) of the questions; they responded correctly to 85% (115 out of 136) of the questions in the second Unit and in the last Unit the group answered 85% (150 out of 176) of the questions correctly. Correct response total for this group increased from 88 in the first Unit, to 150 in the last. See Figures 1 and 2.

The non-film group answered 83% (71 out of 86) of their

questions correctly during the first Unit, responded correctly to 82% (93 out of 113) of their questions in the second Unit and to 89% (156 out of 176) of the questions in the third Unit. The correct response total for the non-film group increased from 71 in the first Unit, to 156 in the last Unit.

However, for the entire study the graphed data reveals the film group able to correctly answer 86% (353 out of 409) level two questions. The non-film group responded correctly 85% (320 out of 375) of the total number of questions. See Figure 3.

Level Three Data

It is level three questions, those demanding pupil explanation or interpretation, that require the pupil to think and reason more abstractly. The ability to perform these cognitive operations may depend on the maturation of the child or may be a function of either content presented, method employed or materials used. Aschner states: "The teacher can stimulate remembering, reasoning, evaluating and creative thinking in any classroom, at any grade or ability level."¹

¹M.J. Aschner, "Asking Questions to Trigger Thinking," Journal of the National Education Association, L (September, 1961), p. 45.

FIGURE 3

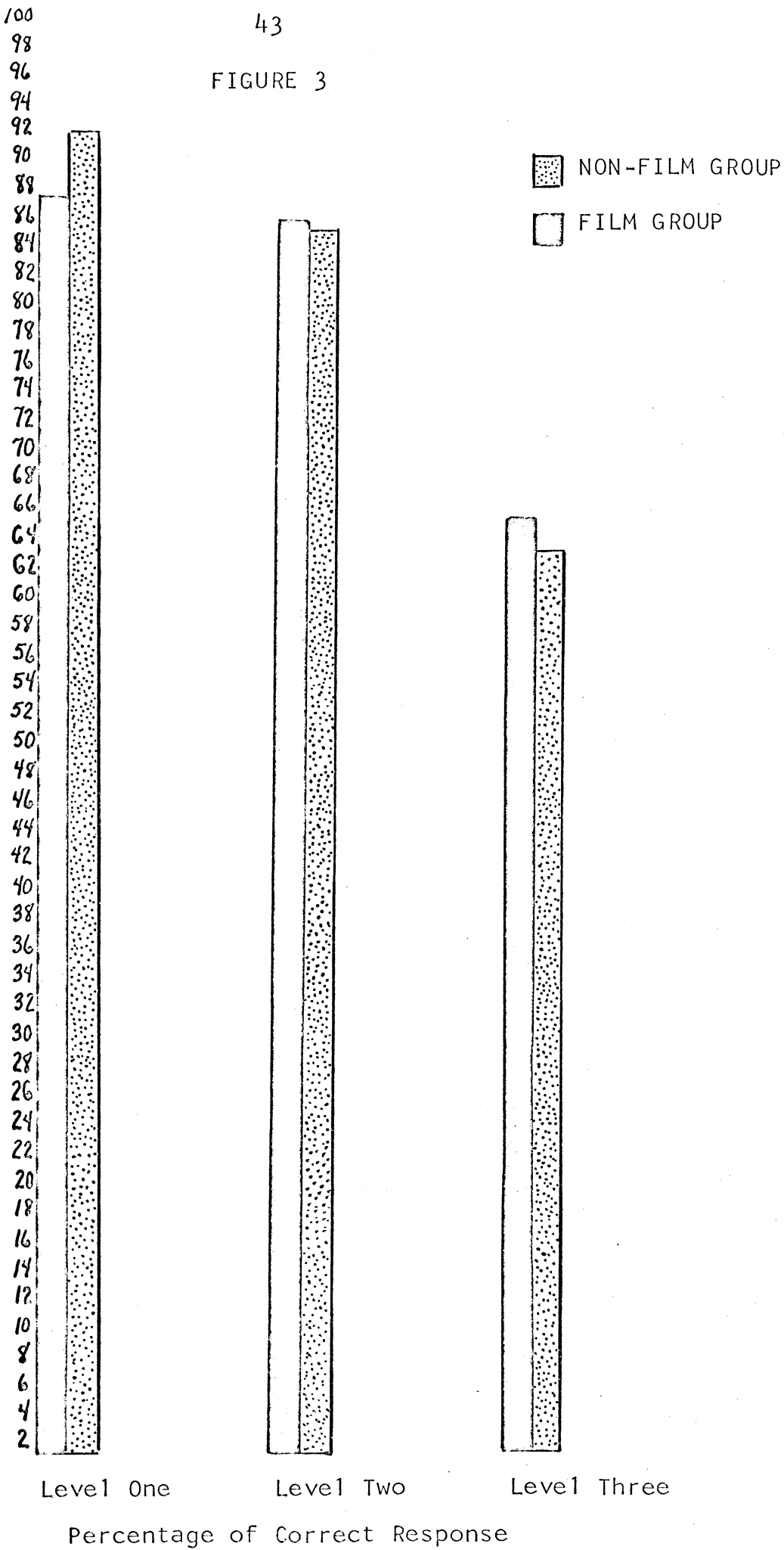
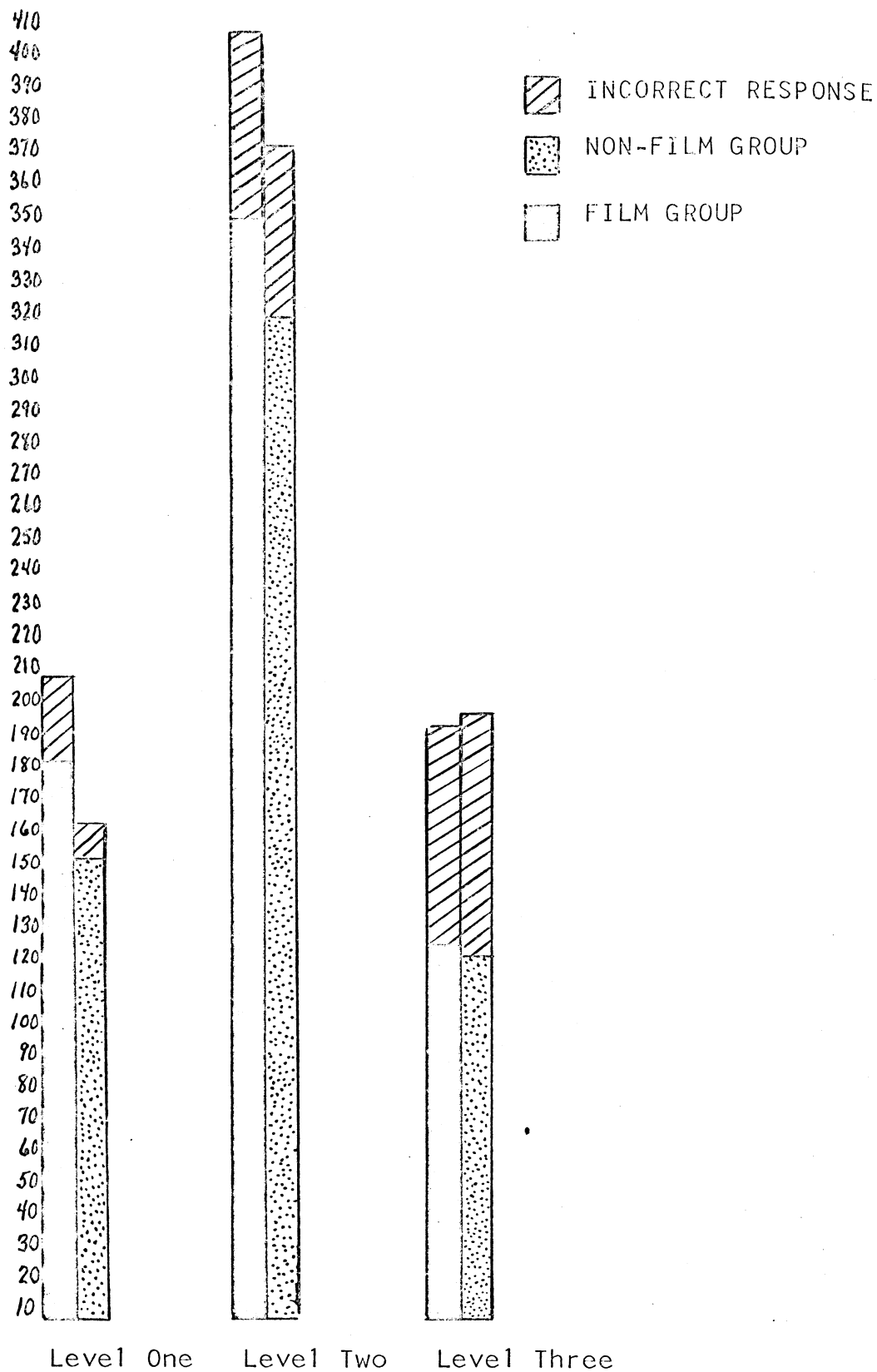


FIGURE 4



PROPORTIONS IN CORRECT RESPONSE

Five children in the film group showed an increase in their ability to answer level three questions. Total increase in questions answered correctly from Unit I to Unit III was 13, while the total decrease was 5. All the five children who showed decreases, registered one less question correctly answered, while the range of increase was from 1 to 4 with a mean increase of 2.6 questions correctly answered. In the non-film group there were three children who failed to show an increase in their ability to respond to this level of questioning and registered a total decrease in correct responses from Unit I to Unit III of 5 questions. Four children indicated a total increase of 9 questions, a mean of 2.3 per child; while three children indicated no change at all.

During the first Unit the film group answered 57% (36 out of 63) of their level three questions correctly; in the second Unit they responded correctly to 66% (46 out of 70) of their questions, and 75% (44 out of 59) of the questions were answered correctly in the last Unit. Correct response total for this group increased from 36 in the first Unit to 44 in the last Unit. See Figures 1 and 2.

The non-film group responded correctly to 67% (41 out of 61) of the questions in the first Unit; answered 55% (38 out of 69) of the level three questions correctly in the second Unit and 67% (45 out of 67) of the level three ques-

tions were answered correctly in the third Unit. This group's response increased from 41 in the first Unit to 45 in the last Unit.

The graphs comparing the group performance for the entire study shows the film group answering 66% (126 of the 192) of their level three questions and the non-film group responded correctly to 63% (124 of the 197) of the questions. See Figure 3 and 4.

Data on Individual Children

Analysis of data for individual children revealed interesting variations in patterns of growth. See Appendix B for pupil graphs.

Dana, a pupil in the film group registered the greatest gains of any child. She was 10-5 chronologically with a mental age of 5-9 and an IQ of 55. In the first Unit Dana answered 86% (6 out of 7) level one questions correctly, and correctly responded to 83% (5 out of 6) of the level one questions in the last Unit. She responded correctly to 80% (8 out of 10) level two questions in the first Unit and answered 82% (14 out of 17) in the third Unit. Dana answered 20% (1 out of 5) level three questions in the first Unit and in the third Unit she managed to correctly respond to 100% (5 out of 5) of the level three questions.

Nancy, a non-film group pupil, age 12-9, had a mental

age of 6-10 and an IQ of 58. During the first Unit she answered 100% (6 out of 6) of the level one questions correctly and answered 100% (5 out of 5) level one questions in the third Unit. She responded correctly to 100% (9 out of 9) of the level two questions in the first Unit and answered 94% (15 out of 16) of the level two questions in the last Unit. Nancy, responded correctly to 67% (4 out of 6) of the level three questions in the first Unit and answered 83% (8 out of 11) of the level three questions in the last Unit, indicating the greatest gain in level three responses.

Rebecca, a pupil in the non-film group, decreased markedly in level three correct responses. She was 9-4 and had a mental age of 6-4. Her IQ was 66. Rebecca answered 100% (5 out of 5) of the questions correctly in the third Unit. She answered 100% (6 out of 6) level two questions in the first Unit and 79% (11 out of 14) of the questions correctly in the last Unit. In the first Unit, Rebecca responded correctly to 100% (6 out of 6) level three questions and in the last Unit she answered only 43% (3 out of 7) of the questions correctly.

Kathleen, a pupil of the film group, was 10-3. She had a mental age of 5-8 and an IQ of 56. In the first Unit she answered 50% (3 out of 6) level one questions correctly and 83% (5 out of 6) in the third Unit. Kathleen responded

to 43% (3 out of 7) level two questions in the first Unit and to 44% (4 out of 9) in the last Unit. In the first Unit she did not answer any of the six level three questions but did respond correctly to 50% (2 out of 4) of the questions in the last Unit. In this case, the investigator hesitated to increase the number of questions asked because of her lack of response in the initial Unit. Possibly the increase would have frustrated the child.

Other pupils increased or decreased in levels of response in less dramatic variations.

Total Data Per Pupil

Level one questions indicate awareness and attention of the pupil to the presented subject matter. There was a total of 372 level one questions asked by the teacher during the study. This indicated the teacher asked a mean of 18.6 questions per child. Correct responses for the entire study totaled 323. The mean of correct responses per child was 16.2 questions.

There was a marked increase of level two questions being asked and correctly answered by the pupils in the third Unit as compared with the first Unit. A total of 784 level two questions were asked during the entire study. This gives a mean of 39.2 level two questions per child. The total of correct responses numbered 673. Each child correctly re-

sponded to a mean of 33.7 level two questions.

Floyd's study revealed that most teachers tend to be too thrifty in asking higher level questions.² This present study indicates the teacher asked a total of 389 level three questions during the study. She asked a mean of 18.9 questions per child. The pupils responded correctly to a total of 250 level three questions. Pupil mean for correct responses of this level was 12.5.

Pupil Questions

As the investigator evaluated the pupil responses another dimension of level of cognitive functioning became evident, namely that of pupil questioning. The last Unit of lessons was then specifically analyzed with respect to number and level of questions put to the teacher by the pupils. It became increasingly noticable that the film group proposed more questions than the pupils of the non-film group.

The film group asked a total of 24 level two questions and 7 level three questions within the last Unit.

The number of level two questions asked by the non-film group totaled only three. They did not ask any level three questions. The film group asked 21 more level two questions than the non-film group. Obviously there was no possibility

²Floyd, op. cit., pp. 53-150.

of pupils asking level one questions since this level was utilized to sustain attention.

It is in this area that the film appeared to exert significant influence. The graphs indicate the film group having a marginal increase in their ability to respond to level two and level three questions. However, the pupil questions of the film group seem to suggest that the film was able to arouse a curiosity and a wonder within the pupils of this group. This was not characteristic of the non-film group.

The following are examples of the pupil questions that were stimulated by the film presentations: "Is the tiger wild to God?", "Why are the animals put in the zoo?", and "How deep is the ocean?"

Teacher Observation

Planned questioning did stimulate and keep the attention of the students during the instructional period. Interesting, too, is the fact that the question technique did promote greater pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil interaction. The instructional period became a shared time of teacher-pupil exchange. As the study progressed and the children absorbed more factual matter they became eager to show and share their knowledge. The frequent invitation to respond gave the children opportunity to do this and consequently

each child's self-esteem was growing. Attention and eagerness was evident in the child's readiness to respond to the teacher's questions.

Social reinforcement was used by the teacher to give the child confidence and further encourage him to continue in answering the designated questions. It is of importance to note that the pupils also began reinforcing themselves and each other with words of praise. For instance, after one boy's correct answer another child said, "That was very good!" Another time Michael cheered for himself when he had given a correct answer.

The level of response most readily modified by the technique of planned questioning was level two. This level demanded that the child have the ability to listen, recall and to be able to express this information. It is evident than that these children are in a sub-religious stage of intellectual development as described by Goldman.³ It is characteristic of children of this stage of development to have the ability to absorb a great deal of data, to begin to answer simple "how" and "why" questions.

It was evidenced by the children's responses in the

³Goldman, op. cit., p. 47.

course of the study that they were learning new religious concepts. In addition to this they were also progressing in their language development. The children were speaking in more complete and longer sentences.

After presenting the lesson on Nature-God's Sacrament, the teacher asked the question: "Why did God make the world?" and one pupil's response was, "God made the world for us to live in and to share in."

During the comprehension check of the lesson Man-Self Awareness, the teacher presented the question: "Why is man the greatest of God's creatures?" The child made the following response: "Because he can think, he can learn and he can love God."

One of the questions during the lesson Man-Steward of Creation was, "Why did God put people in charge of the world?" and the pupil responded with, "Because He loves us and we can think and do many things."

Again, in the lesson on Religious Experience the teacher presented the question: "Who is the only creature that can give love to God?" The pupil replied, "Man is the only creature that can give love to God."

Summary

The quantity and quality of responses obtained by planned questioning were graphed to indicate pupil ability

to respond to a given level of questions within the three Units of the study. The graphs reveal a small increase in group performance in answering the levels of questions within the Units and for the entire study. The film group showed a slight advantage.

The group findings were indicated by the percentage and proportion of correct responses. It can be seen that the differences between the groups were not significant. A difference was found, however between the film group and the non-film groups in the number of questions put to the teacher by the pupils. The film group exceeded the non-film in questions asked in the last Unit of lessons by a margin of 24 to 3.

Finally, teacher observations regarding individual pupils were reported.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Problem

This study was conducted to test the assumption that the technique of planned questioning would evoke higher level responses from educable mentally retarded children in religious instruction.

The effects of silent colored film in stimulating higher level response in educable mentally retarded children was also investigated.

Population

The twenty children (IQ range 49-77; M.A. range 5-5 - 7-5) involved in the study were enrolled at St. Coletta School, a private residential facility in Jefferson, Wisconsin. The children were divided into two equated groups. Each group was composed of ten children.

The same method of planned questioning was used as the teaching technique for both groups and the different response levels from the first lesson to the last. The lesson plans and planned questions were also identical.

The only variable was the use of silent film with one group. Non-film visuals were supplied by the teacher of the other group.

Treatment of the Data

Three levels of questioning were established as a criterion to evaluate pupil response. Level one required the pupils to be aware of the concept being developed and to be able to repeat what had just been said by the teacher. Level two questions demanded that the pupils remember factual information of the presented lesson and to express this data. Level three challenged the students to give explanations and/or definitions regarding lesson content.

Data for the study was obtained from the daily taped sessions of both groups. The level of response for each was tallied and when the study terminated the level of response for each child and the groups were graphed in three Unit clusters. Each child's graph indicates his total number of responses, the number of correct responses and the level of each response. The group graphs indicate the same information.

The present investigator was primarily concerned with evaluating the technique of planned questioning and its effects on the modification of educable retarded children's pattern of response. Data for the thirty-two lessons were

analyzed and the child's correct number of responses and his level of response in the first Unit were compared with his correct number and level of response in the final Unit of the study. However, it was necessary to have equated groups for the film study.

Results

Statistical analyses of IQ and M.A. indicated no significant differences between the film and non-film groups. The groups were considered to be equivalent in these dimensions at the time the study began.

Evaluation of an individual's performance was made by comparing his quantity and quality of response in the final Unit with his responses in the initial Unit.

The non-film group responded correctly to 92% level one questions during the entire study while the film group correctly answered 88% of their level one questions. See Figure 3.

The film group correctly answered 86% of their level two questions during the study. This was a very slight increase in comparison to the non-film's correct response of 85%.

For level three questions, the film group totaled 66% correct responses while the non-film group answered 63% of their total level three questions.

However, there is a difference in pupil questioning between the film and non-film group. In evaluating the pupil responses in the last Unit of tapes, the investigator found that the film group asked a total of twenty-four level two questions and seven level three. The non-film group asked only three level two questions and did not ask any level three questions.

Implications

The teacher must be knowledgeable and skillful in the use of the technique of questioning if it is to be an effective and purposeful teaching method. Much time and thought is needed to carefully analyze subject matter and to consider the type of questions that must be prepared in order to motivate the pupils, to provoke thinking and to stimulate learning during an instructional period.

Advantages of the technique of planned and controlled questioning with educable mentally retarded children would seem to be:

1. Planned questioning allowed greater opportunity for teacher-pupil interaction. This is evident in the individual and group graphs in addition to the total questions that were asked, the total of correct responses per group and per pupil.
2. The level of response that was most affected by

this technique was level two. It was this level that demanded factual information. Each child correctly responded to 33.7 level two questions during the study.

Nevertheless, level three responses were also affected by method-media interaction. The film group showed an 18% gain from the first Unit to the final Unit.

3. It was found that the technique of planned and controlled questioning in some manner related to the teachers expectancy. The children began to realize from the frequency of designated questions that the teacher expected them to recall, to think and to express their knowledge.
4. Although there were more level two questions asked, nevertheless each pupil was challenged to a higher level of thinking by the level three questions. A mean of 18.9 level three questions were asked each pupil during the time of the study.

There had not been any known research on the use of silent colored film in presenting religious concepts to educable mentally retarded children. The films used in this study were especially designed by the senior investigator to present a single concept. Film length and speed were care-

fully considered for the educable mentally retarded child.

Although St. Coletta School has a rich supply of instructional materials the teacher had difficulty in finding materials for the non-film group that were as beautiful, alive and as realistic as the colored film.

It seemed that the teacher-film interaction proved to be more interesting to the pupils and to be able to sustain their attention for a longer period of time than the ordinary teacher-media interaction. The film presentation eliminated the usual teacher-talk needed to present the lesson.

It was also noticed that the film group more readily identified with the persons and situations in the film than the non-film group identified with persons and situations in their materials.

The silent film helped the child to focus his entire attention on the film content. It also allowed the child to comment, to exclaim and even ask questions. The film did arouse curiosity in the pupils that the other media was not able to do.

A special educator states:

...retarded children need a teacher who is encouragingly "impatient" and realistically demanding--one who requires them to "stretch" a little more each day to meet her continually revised expectations for them.¹

¹Sister Joanne Marie Kliebhan, "The Effect of Goal-Setting and Modeling on the Performance of Retarded Adolescents in an Occupational Workshop," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1966.

If a teacher is to do this for children than methods and media must be carefully considered so that they will give maximum effectiveness to the presented subject matter whether it be religion, reading, arithmetic or any other academic subject.

Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of the present study have indicated the need for further investigation of effective technique-media interactions that will ensure the educable mentally retarded pupil the greatest possible development as a person and a Christian.

Suggestions for further research include:

1. Studies similar to the present one to investigate the effectiveness of planned and controlled questioning in other academic areas and with various mental age groups.
2. A study of the nature and extent of the different levels of teacher proposed questions as a factor influencing pupil proposed questions.
3. Replication of the present study using the technique of planned questioning as the only experimental variable.
4. Investigation of the optimal film length in using silent colored film with educable mentally retarded children.
5. There still remains the need for further research into various aspects of the use of film with educable mentally retarded children: sound, color, length, animation and speed.

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APPENDIX A
SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

Date: October 9, 1968

Lesson One Part One

CONCEPT: Greatness-Majesty

AIM: To help the children become aware of God's Greatness through creation.

READINESS:

When you walk into your house there are many things that show Mommy and Daddy's love and care for you. Now there are many things you see or hear or smell or feel and all of these things show and tell us something. You know that the whole world is a gift of love from God our Father. God is so good and great that He gives us all that we have. Today we are going to look for things in the picture/pictures that show God's love and greatness.

PRESENTATION:

Film Group: Film on Greatness-Majesty

Non-film Group: Attractive to pictures to awe and delight the children and to lead them to understand that the Maker gives all this in love.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Name some of the things you saw that show God's greatness. (Tall mountains, water, trees, sunlight, and sky) We can make some things - e.g. in art class - but they cannot live or grow. God the Father is so great He formed and made the high strong mountains, the fast moving waters, the sky that never ends and the warm, great sunlight that helps plants and animals and all of us to grow. All these things belong to God and they all do what God made them to do. God lets us use all of these beautiful things.

CLOSURE:

You have just seen many things that show God's love and greatness. You have also told me about God our Father, His love and that you talk to Him when you pray. Now let us all think about God and tell Him how much we like the things He has made. Say after me: "Dear God, how great You are. Thank you for the mountains, the water and sunlight. I love You."

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Film Group: 16 millimeter silent film on Greatness-Majesty

Non-film Group: Eight large colored pictures of mountains, water, trees and sky.

Date: October 10, 1968
 Lesson One Part Two

CONCEPT: Greatness-Majesty

AIM: To help the children become even more aware of God's greatness shown through creation, and more especially through man.

READINESS:

You learn about others by the things they do - you know you have a loving mother because she fixes a good dinner for you, you know you have a strong father by the strong things he can do and you know that your teacher cares for you by the help she gives you each day. Now listen carefully: you learn about God by the things He has done and is doing for you. Yesterday we saw a picture/pictures and there were many things in it that help us remember how wonderful and great God is. (Help children recall what they saw by questioning).

God's greatness is shown in all these things around us. But there is one thing God has made that shows His love and greatness more than anything else. I know you would like to see the picture/pictures again. This time I want you to look very carefully for something that shows God's greatness more than anything else.

PRESENTATION:

Film Group: Film on Greatness-Majesty

Non-film Group: Large colored pictures

Elicit answers in an effort to help children to discover that Man is the creature that shows God's greatness more than anything else.

COMPREHENSION:

Let us talk about the mountains, plants, animals and man for just a few minutes. *(Teacher draws steps on the chalk-board and places the various levels of creation on the steps.) You know the mountains are great, but can they move or grow or think? You know that trees can grow, but can they move and think? You know that animals move and grow, but can they think like man? Now man can move and grow and think and Love and Praise God! Man shows God's greatness more than anything else because he can love and praise God his Father in a way that nothing else can.

CLOSURE:

God the Father loves you very much and you His Children want to return that love. Let us sing a prayer about it: "God's Children" (God's Gifts to Us, W.H. Sadlier, Inc.), p. 216.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Same materials as in Lesson One, Part One.

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Date: October 11, 1968
 Lesson Two Part One

CONCEPT: Strength

AIM: To help the children to become aware of the power and strength around us in hopes to lead them to an understanding of God's almighty power.

READINESS:

Do you know what it means to be powerful or strong? It means to be able to do great things. Can you tell something you have seen that is powerful? In the picture/pictures today you are going to see some machines that are very powerful.

PRESENTATION:

Film Group: Film on Strength

Non-film Group: Filmstrip "Trucks at Work"

You saw how strong these machines were and you have seen how powerful jets and ships are. If you watch TV tonight and see our rocket ship going into space you will see how much power the rocket must have to lift the ship off the earth and into space. Can you think of any other machines that are powerful?

Machines aren't the only things that are full of power. Animals also show power and strength - horses, elephants, tigers, and lions are powerful. Sometimes people use powerful animals to help them work; they use horses or elephants.

Different weather shows power. Think of lightning and windstorms, or the power of the sun. If you have visited a lake or an ocean, you have seen the powerful waves.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

All these things you have seen and talked about are powerful. Some show the power of God - animals, wind and sun. Machines are made by man; man uses his power of thinking to make them. The power to think comes from God. God is all-powerful; He can do all things. The things you talked about this morning show you God's power.

CLOSURE:

God can do all things. He is all-powerful. He loves us. Let us sing our song of love to God. "God's Children" (Reference given in Lesson One, Part Two)

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Film Group: 16 millimeter silent film on Strength

Non-film Group: "Trucks at Work" (Curriculum Filmstrip)

Date: October 14, 1968

Lesson Two Part Two

CONCEPT: Strength

AIM: To help the children become aware of God's strength and power especially shown in man.

READINESS: Last Friday you talked about power and strength. You said that when something or some person had power it is able to do great things. You saw a film that showed powerful machines. Let us watch it again and talk about the things that machines are able to do.

PRESENTATION:

We know that these machines are made by man - by people. God the all-powerful shared his power with you, with people. God gave you the power to think and do different things. Let us think about the last time you were here in this room. You talked about power in machines. You said that jets, rockets and bulldozers have power. You also said that some animals have power and different kinds of weather show power. These things show God's power. He is all-powerful. When I say that He is all-powerful, I mean that He is able to do great things, all things. Now God in His great power made the world - the water, land, trees and plants, animals, and best of all - Man. Man, too, is a sign of God's power. Man is the greatest of all things God made. Why? Because God gives man power to do many things: to think, to learn, to love and praise Him.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

What has God given us? He has shared with each of us some of His power. Like God our Father, each of you can think and learn and love. None of the other creatures of God are made like God. He loves man so much and wants man to love Him and to be happy with Him. What does God want from man? Why does God want our love? We have power to think and know and love and to do many other things.

CLOSURE:

God our Father gives you power to work for Him in making the world better and a happier place to live in. Let us all use this power and work for God by making St. Coletta's a better place by doing our best in school and by loving God and trying to love those we live with here at school.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Same materials as in Lesson Two, Part One.

Date: October 15, 1968

Reinforcement of Lesson One and Two CONCEPT: Greatness and Strength

AIM: Reinforce the concepts of greatness and strength. To develop an awareness of God's greatness and strength through creation.

READINESS:

The last few days you have been talking about something very great and important. You have been talking about God and the things He has made for us. You said you learn by seeing, by hearing, by touching the things around you. These many things show us something about God. God is our loving Father who can do all things. He gave us the whole world as a gift of love. All things belong to Him but He wants us to use them.

PRESENTATION:

God's greatness is shown in the mountains, plants and the animals that delight us and help us. But man shows God's greatness more than anything else. No other creature of God is greater than man. What can man do that no other creature of God can do? He can love God.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

What can we do to show our love for God?

How do we know that God loves us?

What does powerful mean?

No other creature has power to think, to know and to love God like man can. Like God we can think, know and love. God has given us this power; He gave it to us because He loves us.

How can we show our love to God.

CLOSURE:

Today we are going to draw pictures of things around us. These things help us to know how great or powerful God is. The pictures that show God's greatness will be taped on one wall; the pictures you draw that show God's power will be taped on the other wall.

Let us tell God how great and good He is.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Newsprint 12X18

Crayons

Date: November 4, 1968
 Lesson Seven Part One

CONCEPT: Nature:
 God's Sacrament

AIM: To instill an appreciation, love and gratitude for the world and the beauties of creation.

READINESS:

It is so nice to see all of your happy faces on this beautiful morning. Why should you be happy this morning? Who gave us eyes to see, ears to hear and the sense of touch? There are so many things around you to make you happy. There are things that are full of color, big things like mountains, small things like tiny ants; there are beautiful sounds to hear. Where did all this beauty come from? Yes, everything God made is good. Why did He make all things? He made them for man to use and enjoy. He wanted all men to live together and work together in a happy in this world. How joyful we should be with all these things. When we feel so happy about our world we can say one word to show our happiness. We can say ALLELUIA.

PRESENTATION:

The picture/pictures that you are going to see will fill you with such happiness that you will want to say ALLELUIA!

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

What are some of the beautiful things we saw?
 Where did all these beautiful and useful things come from?
 Why did God make them?
 What can you say to tell God how happy you are with all these gifts of His love?

CLOSURE:

We can tell God how happy we are with these gifts of love when we pray. We can say THANK YOU. Today you will tell God how great and wonderful He is. "Lord, how great and wonderful You are!"

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Film Group: 16 millimeter silent film On Nature:
 God's Sacrament

Non-film Group: Transparencies: Mountain scene and
 ocean scene

Children added strokes to the pictures
 to illustrate further.

Date: November 5, 1968
 Lesson Seven Part Two

CONCEPT: Nature:
 God's Sacrament

AIM: To develop delight for God's world.

READINESS:

Do you remember how important it is to say "Good Morning?" It is wishing another person a nice day. Have you ever watched a mother and father bird get their nest ready for their baby birds? They pick up bits of fuzzy seeds or straw; sometimes even their own feathers. They spend a long time getting a home ready for the baby birds.

PRESENTATION:

God our Father prepared with great love and care a home for all of us. In His great love and power He prepared the world for our home. If you look up into the sky you see some of the things God has made. The sun, moon and stars give us light. The sun makes us happy by its brightness. We do not like to be in the dark but we need darkness to help us sleep and rest. God planned just enough light and enough darkness. He made the sun, moon and stars for us to enjoy and to use. Yet these things cannot know God; they cannot love Him. When you walked to school this morning you walked on the earth. The land or earth is our home. We use the land as a place to build our homes and cities. The farmers use the land to plant seeds and raise the vegetables that our bodies need to grow. Water is another gift from God and a very important gift. You are not too old but you have seen different plants and trees, flowers and vegetables. We use trees to give us shade in the hot summer; their wood for furniture and for making our homes. Everyday we eat something made by God. Most of our food comes from different plants. These grow from tiny seeds, put in the ground and the sun and rain help them to grow. Animals are also creatures of God. Some animals we enjoy; others we use for food. Let us look at some pictures and thank God for these gifts.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

All these things we have tell us we have a loving Father who plans and cares for us. For whom did God make all these things? Why did He do this?

CLOSURE: Let us pray together: Stars of the Lord--Praise the Lord
 Sun of the Lord Praise the Lord
 Earth and Water " " "
 Plants of the Lord " " "
 All you people of the Lord

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Same materials as Lesson Seven, Part One.

Date: November 6, 1968
 Lesson Eight Part Two

CONCEPT: Enjoying Creation

AIM: To help the children to appreciate and enjoy creation.

READINESS:

Who made the world? Everything God made is good. When we look up into the sky we see things God made. What are some of the things? God made the land - some high parts that we call mountains and the low parts we call valleys. God made water - rain, ocean and lakes. How do we use water? God also made different plants and flowers. Everyday we eat something made by God. Let us say "thank you, God" for all these things.

PRESENTATION:

God is happy when you like what He made for you. When you look around and see all these beautiful things God made you can say "How much God loves me!" When you see the beautiful sky, you can say, "How much God loves me!" When you see growing plants and different animals, you can say, "How much God loves me!" All these things were made for us to enjoy. Today, we are going to see some more pictures of things God has made for us. I know you are going to enjoy the picture/pictures you will see.

Film Group: Film on Enjoying Creation

Non-film Group: Filmstrip "Families in the Zoo"

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Let us talk about the pictures that you have just seen. Who made all the creatures you saw in our pictures? Why did He make them? All of these things are good but none of these things - the sun, plants, water and not even the animals you saw and talked about can talk to God in prayer. Not one can love God.

CLOSURE:

Today let us all offer our thank you to God for all these creatures.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Film Group: 16 millimeter silent film on Enjoying
 Creation

Non-film Group: Filmstrip "Families in the Zoo"

Date: November 7, 1968
Lesson Eight Part Two

CONCEPT: Enjoying Creation

AIM: To continue to help the children to appreciate and enjoy creation.

READINESS:

Good Morning! I have a very special prayer for us to say as we begin this new day. Each of you will take turns in saying a line of the prayer after me. (Parts of the Benedictus) To whom do all things belong? Why do the trees, sun, and animals belong to God? All these things that God made please Him by just being what God made them to be. God made the sun to shine and give bright light and so it does. God made the different plants and trees to bear fruit and so they do.
God made some animals to be wild and so they are.
God made some animals to be tame and so they are.

PRESENTATION:

All things do what God made them to do. Some animals are strong. Some animals are fast. Some animals are gentle. Some animals are beautiful. And some animals are funny.

As you watch our movie (or look at the pictures) today let us see how many things animals can do.

Present film/pictures.

What did you see the different animals doing? Animals can do many things but they cannot do the many things we can do. But they please God by just being what God made them to be.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Who made the strong elephants? Who made the fast tiger? Who made the gentle and quiet deer? Everything God made is good. Why did God make all these animals? All things God made are good but can they love God? Why are we greater than all other things God has made?

CLOSURE:

Let us ask God to help us to love Him more and more each day.

Prayer

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Film Group: Same film as in Lesson Eight, Part One.

Non-film Group: Colored pictures of animals
(Peabody Language Development Kit,
American Guidance Service, Inc.)

Date: November 8, 1968

Reinforcement for Lessons

Seven and Eight

CONCEPT: Nature: God's

Sacrament

Enjoying Creation

AIM: To reinforce the concepts of Lessons Seven and Eight.

READINESS:

God is a loving Father. He has always loved us and thought of us. He was thinking of us when He made the sun and stars. Can you tell me some more things that God made for us?

PRESENTATION:

Look at this picture. (A picture of lightning streaking across the sky.) What do you see in the summer during a storm that you also see in this picture? God our Father made all these beautiful and powerful things. (Show pictures of land, plants and animals.) God made the land and helps all things to grow in the earth. All these things we are talking about are good. God made the waters, the animals that live in the sea, on the land and in the air. Some things He made for us to enjoy; other things He made for our use. We use the wood from trees to make our homes, furniture, even our pencils. We use metal from the earth to make pipes, metal frames on the windows and doors. We use the animals for food; some parts of animals are used to make shoes or footballs. The wool from sheep is used for warm sweaters, for coats, and for dresses and boy's suits. God gave us all that we have. These are all gifts of His love. He wants us to use His gifts to be happy here on earth.

COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Various questions interlaced in the presentation to check on understanding. In addition:

Who did God make all these things for?

Name some things He made us to use for food and clothing?

Name some things He made us to enjoy?

Why are these things all good?

Why did God give us these things?

What can we say to thank Him for these gifts?

CLOSURE:

Let us join together in our friendship circle and praise God and thank Him for these gifts.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Pictures of nature from magazines which the children cut out and discussed.

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APPENDIX B
GRAPHS THAT
INDICATE RESPONSE PATTERNS
IN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

